

Staines for the title?

MANY people would have scoffed at any idea of Staines Town taking the Rothmans Isthmian League championship not long ago and yet in the last five weeks, the Middlesex club have rocketed up the Division One table.

A staggering rise of 12 places from 15th to fourth in five weeks has now put Staines in with an outside chance of lifting the title. Tonight (Tuesday) they meet Wycombe Wanderers at home in a match that could end the hopes of one of the two clubs.

Staines are currently one point behind the Blues who have a game in hand but Staines' form in the last few weeks has now opened up the way for a final surge at the championship. They have won their last six games and seven of their last eight. Included in that run are victories over Ilford and Tooting at home by 1-0 and 3-0 respectively and a 2-0 triumph at Sutton.

Obviously tonight's game is vital to both clubs. With Enfield, Tooting and Dagenham behind on their fixtures, the race is still wide open and any one of eight clubs is still in with a chance.

Staines have an old score to settle for they went down to a somewhat unlucky defeat at Loakes Park in the very first match of the season, unlucky in so much as they conceded a goal in the 89th minute to lose 2-1. Tony Horseman hit Wycombe's first goal with Billy Salkeld replying for Staines. Howard Kennedy got that last gasp winner.

Since then there has been several changes in personnel at Staines. Frank Parsons, who once played for Cardiff in the European Cup Winners Cup, has taken over from Graham Yates in goal while reserve Peter Shaw is now the right back. The mid-field trio is the same but up front, Peter Cruse has joined his former team-mate John Ritchie. Cruse signed from Barking three months ago to renew the old striking partnership that operated at Slough and later Arsenal.

Wanderers are likely to field the side that lost at Leatherhead on Saturday although Terry Reardon is struggling with a leg injury. Dave Alexander is standing by to come in, should Reardon not be fit.

ROTHMANS ISTHMIAN LEAGUE DIVISION ONE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ilford	32	18	6	8	43	28	60
Dulwich	36	18	5	13	56	33	59
Wycombe	33	17	8	8	50	34	59
Staines	34	17	7	10	43	28	58
Dagenham	30	17	6	7	66	40	57
Hendon	33	16	9	8	44	26	57
Enfield	27	16	7	4	52	20	55
Tooting	30	16	7	7	53	32	55
Slough	36	15	10	11	52	41	55
L'head	33	15	8	10	56	45	53
Sutton	31	14	10	7	57	37	52
Woking	37	13	8	16	52	53	47
Barking	34	13	6	15	48	52	45
Hitchin	35	12	9	14	39	44	45
K'ngstnrian	35	13	6	16	49	75	45
Hayes	37	9	17	11	40	42	44
W'stow	36	11	10	15	42	53	43
Bishops	31	9	8	14	32	37	35
Oxford	34	8	8	18	26	50	32
L'stone	35	7	10	18	30	53	31
Southall	34	7	8	19	41	56	29
Clapton	37	2	1	34	13	105	7